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Yoga is skill in the performance of actions: therefore do thou aspire to this devotion.
—*The Bhagavad-Gita*

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TODAY'S "OCCULTISTS"

IN its September/October number; the *Humanist,* a publication of the American Humanist Association and the American Ethical Union, performs a service of considerable value to the general reader, and of particular interest to the student of Theosophy. This issue presents ten articles in a survey and critical examination of "The New Cults." The contributors cover much ground in brief space, and their comment is sometimes both informing and illuminating. We should add that while both Theosophy and H. P. Blavatsky are referred to in passing, there is little or no understanding shown of the content and purpose of the Theosophical philosophy, nor of the character and historic role of the nineteenth-century personage who recorded its teachings, and who, with colleagues and associates, launched in the modern world the regenerative effort identified as the Theosophical Movement.

Students of Theosophy are nonetheless likely to conclude that this collection of articles by humanist writers reflects in various ways the influence and leaven of Theosophic ideas. The discussions provided sometimes reveal a breadth of mind, an openness, and even a philosophic maturity that hardly existed a century ago, except in the case of isolated individuals. Limitations of outlook are of course evident. The stance of these writers is still largely that of the unengaged, "objective," scientific observer. On the other hand, a temper of inquiry, of impartial review, of wondering and admission of the inadequacy of existing theories of knowledge is also plainly in evidence.

As for the cavalier disposition of Theosophy as one of the "cults" of the day, we must ask ourselves what or who is responsible for this failure on the part of humanist observers to inform themselves more directly concerning what Theosophy stands for and is about. Obviously, these writers do not know. In part, we might say, the vicissitudes of the Theosophical Movement itself may be reflected in this indifference to actual Theosophical teachings. In part, the law of intellectual development spoken of in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 326-27) is a limiting factor; and, in part, again, the individual and collective Karma of the cycle, as indicated in the attitudes of both writers and readers, exercises a determining influence. Finally, we may notice that this survey is published in 1974; ten years from now, quite another spirit may be manifest. There is a sense in which the present outlook of intelligent, critical, and seriously concerned observers should be compared with what was possible—or took place—a hundred years ago, before the impact of H. P. Blavatsky and her co-workers made itself felt on the mind of the times.

What, then, do the *Humanist* writers and critics say? The *Humanist* editor, Paul Kurtz, having named ten or so of the "cults" which have lately gained popular attention, asks this question:

> What are we to make of the new cult scene? Surely, we must be critical—not only of the cults but also of the media that dramatize or sensationalize them without adequate evaluation. Movies, television, and pulp publishers have for years outdone each other in trying to make vampires, demons, ghosts, and other creatures into genuine realities. Now they, and even respectable publishers, are selling increasing quantities of trash, which like sex and violence are eagerly devoured by the growing audience of hoodwinkables, bamboozlables, and gullibles in our midst.

The claim by one humanist spokesman "that secular and scientific humanism has destroyed the old religious order and that out of this chaos new cults have emerged to provide meaning for those desperately seeking it," is admitted to have some truth, yet Mr. Kurtz maintains that present-day humanism does not slam the door on thoughtful investigation of the hitherto unknown:

> It is true that secular society often expresses a basic skepticism about the so-called "transcendent." What is central to scientific humanism is the commitment to rigorous methods in assessing claims to truth—that is, we demand that evidence and reason verify hypotheses and that we suspend judgment until

> we find adequate grounds. The scientific humanist does not seek to foreclose inquiry or narrow experience; indeed, we should be willing to investigate a whole range of phenomena, including for example, paranormal psychology and the possible therapeutic effects of Yoga or meditation. One must avoid the tendency to lump everything unconventional together as "cultist" and to reject it without examination.

As a statement of principle, this seems admirable enough; some day, perhaps, it will be more thoughtfully applied by humanist commentators. What do the other *Humanist* writers say?

Ethel Romm, who has visited various cultist centers and talked to a number of their adherents, describes one young woman, now a member of a group named "Process, the Church of Final Judgment." Its followers are said to believe that the world will come to an end about the year 2000, after which will come a "joyful beginning of the new." Of the way of life chosen by this young woman, Ethel Romm writes:

> Sister Fatima did not expand the usage of exotic drugs she had been dabbling in since the age of sixteen, as had others among her friends. She did not walk the streets for a pimp's deliverance or steal or beg on the streets for her commune. She did not take refuge inside asylum walls. She has not been identified by her teeth after a shoot-out with the FBI. Which is to say, she did not choose addiction, prostitution, delinquency, bohemianism, madness, or terrorism, but the least baleful of a long list of modern ways out—mysticism. What I remember best about her are her eyes, laughing, and very clear.

A more informed account of the meaning of "mysticism" would of course be desirable, but at this journalistic level of description Miss Romm's point has some merit.

In a discussion of the highly publicized wave of "witchcraft," lately intriguing as well as shocking the American public, Marcello Truzzi begins with a pertinent observation:

> We are clearly in the midst of a great occult revival, but as H. L. Mencken long ago noted, "The surest way to get rich in this country, next to robbing a bank, is to start a new religion." As one looks over the list of the new cults that have been developing in the United States over the past ten years, however, one realizes that the market for supernatural belief-systems has today become a highly competitive one.

"Witchcraft" is among these belief-systems, and study of its activities along with those of similar groups has led Mr. Truzzi to conclude "that the great manifest wave of interest in con-

temporary occultism has been more of a non-serious popular-culture manifestation, akin to reading science-fiction, than a highly personalized spiritual involvement." The "witchcraft" groups, he reports, publish manuals on "magical technology," including books on astrology, palmistry, and divination, since systematic instruction "helps to give power over those who believe in such systems." Mr. Truzzi, incidentally, has looked into religious history sufficiently to find it pertinent to differentiate between these modern cults and the beliefs of the ancient Gnostics, in which, he relates, Satan "is reconceived as the second son of God who rules the earth," and he notes that this is the "heresy" of which the Knights Templar were accused. His historical note would have been clarified by adding that this "second son of God" was indeed Jehovah, who, in certain of his personifications, may be regarded as Satan. The most prominent of the present-day witch cults, Mr. Truzzi reports, teaches materialism and advocates hedonistic enjoyment and the survival of the fittest.

Another writer in the *Humanist,* John B. Snook, declares it "a mistake to let the universe of the new religious groups be defined by sensational publicity as including only the exotic and authoritarian." We need, he says, to find an explanation for the impulse behind these breakaways from established tradition.

In a similar spirit of inquiry, after suggesting that the entry of "the occult" into the public domain has been "a mixed blessing," Marjory Clay concludes:

> If they have contributed nothing else to man's life in this twentieth century, the new cults have shown him that, indeed, exact knowledge is not enough, because exact knowledge—objective knowledge—too often ignores the human subject who is, after all, both means and end in the pursuit of meaning in this universe.

The "occult," however, for this writer, seems to be little more than "mystery and ritual," while "occult phenomena" are characterized as "almost invariably unique and inexplicable." Quite evidently, no disciplined definition of the occult has been sought out by any of these writers; mainly, perhaps, for the reason that an "occultism" which can become *popular* can hardly be more than the shadow of true occultism, so that what is now widely in print on the subject is inevitably descriptive of some brand of pseudo-occultism. Occultism, after all, deals with the *unknown* laws of nature, so how could popular doctrine, easily

acquired in a book or pamphlet, disclose anything but pretense? (Occult *philosophy,* which does not promise or seek the development of powers, is in another category.)

A similar misconception is found in the article by Richard T. Hull, who says that occultism, along with other religious cults, has for its central maxim, "Believe in order to understand!" This writer decides that "occult theories are fatally arbitrary and cannot qualify as reasonable cognitive alternatives." In contrast, the true maxim is, "Live the life if you would know the doctrine," and the initial requirement, which safeguards the disciple until he has killed out in himself all hunger for "power," is devotion to a life of altruism and service. Yet Mr. Hull also contributes a useful general comment:

> Because of the enormous success of physical science in accounting for the external world, there has been a presumption that the physical interpretation is adequate for all phenomena of experience. The vocabulary of physical science has become the only descriptive vocabulary that many scientists will employ when joining the great disputes. To set descriptions of occult phenomena in the language of physics as a precondition of scientific, objective investigation is to require capitulation of believers in the occult as a condition of cognitive respectability. Science needs to be reminded of the distinction between description and interpretation, and it needs to be reminded of the fundamental role of experience in providing phenomena to be explained. This is the great contribution of subjectivism: the emphasis upon experience as our fundamental source of knowledge of the world and ourselves.

However, having expressed this exemplary attitude toward the hidden or unknown, Mr. Hull then shows little awareness of the spirit of true occultism. His critical judgments seem based on a sampling of grossly misleading or superficial examples:

> It is not persuasive to require a scientist to accept Devil worship or the way of Zen in order to investigate the historical basis of the rites of exorcism or the ability of a Yogi to control his heartbeat rate. Yet, to insist upon the interpretations by those views of such phenomena as their primary characterizations is to make such a requirement. Neither side of a dispute may expect to win by stacking its descriptive deck, for the other will simply refuse to play.

The view of "occultism" implicit in this paragraph cries out for correction. In the first place, no genuine occultist would be interested in persuading scientific investigators to accept the real-

ity of occult or "magical" powers, except in terms of a broad conception of the potential capacities of all human beings, as a resource of spiritual aspiration. The record is clear, so far as those who call themselves "Theosophists" are concerned. Many years ago, a letter from an august source (published by H. P. Blavatsky in *Lucifer* for August, 1888) gave the attitude of the Occultists who caused the Theosophical Movement to be launched in the world. In those days, there were many who sought demonstrations, proofs, and instruction in "occult powers." In this letter, the writer asked:

> Should we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans, fed on the fat of the land, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the rationale of bell-ringing, cup-growing, spiritual telephone, etc., etc., and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and the despised, the lowly and the oppressed, to take care of themselves, and of their hereafter, the best they know how? Perish rather the Theosophical Society . . . than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic and a hall of Occultism. . . .

"Think you," another such Correspondent wrote, "the truth has been shown to you for your sole advantage? That we have broken the silence of centuries for a handful of dreamers only?"

There has never been, in all the literature and writings of the Founders of the Theosophical Society, any ambiguity on this question. Theosophy is sometimes called the "occult philosophy," but it has never proposed, or advocated, instruction in the use of occult powers. These will be developed, Theosophy teaches, as the natural concomitant of psycho-spiritual evolution, and only after full moral responsibility has first been achieved. Pleasing or impressing "scientific investigators" can be of no concern to a true occultist, nor is occultism, as the science of powers unknown to the vast majority of mankind, an area in which precocious investigation can be to anyone's benefit. One need only acquaint himself with the conditions prerequisite to gaining actual occult knowledge, or powers, as distinguished from occult philosophy, to recognize the error of identifying as "occultists" those who advertise their claims and attempt to win adherents for their plans and courses in "self-development."

A fair idea of the original meaning of "occultism" is obtained by reading Madame Blavatsky's comparison of occult with exact science (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 477-78):

> So far as Science remains what in the words of Prof. Huxley it is, viz., "organized common sense"; so far as its inferences are drawn from accurate premises—its generalizations resting on a purely inductive basis—every Theosophist and Occultist welcomes respectfully and with due admiration its contributions to the domain of cosmological law. There can be no possible conflict between the teachings of occult and so-called exact Science, where the conclusions of the latter are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact. It is only when its more ardent exponents, over-stepping the limits of observed phenomena in order to penetrate into the arcana of Being, attempt to wrench the formation of Kosmos and its *living* Forces from Spirit, and attribute all to blind matter, that the Occultists claim the right to dispute and call in question their theories. Science cannot, owing to the very nature of things, unveil the mystery of the universe around us. Science can, it is true, collect, classify, and generalize upon phenomena; but the occultist, arguing from admitted metaphysical data, declares that the daring explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer his consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes. To effect this, he must develop faculties which are absolutely dormant—save in a few rare and exceptional cases. . . . He can in no other conceivable manner collect the facts on which to base his speculations.

On the basis of common sense alone, it should be evident that the founders of the Theosophical Movement could not have been interested in persuading people to try to become "occultists," in any of the now popular meanings of this term, nor were they concerned with "proving" to scientists the realities of occultism in the sense of providing phenomenal demonstrations. The *fact* of unknown laws was important to communicate, for the reason that the understanding of both the world and human experience was seen to be dependent upon a recognition of at least the possibility of hidden laws; and it is part of the logic of evolution, as taught by Theosophy, that in time the hidden powers in man will flower into full expression.

But for the great majority, such developments lie far in the future. A rush after powers, an eagerness for the excitement of magical demonstrations, a hunger for personal development—all these tendencies were actively discouraged by the teachers of Theosophy. The emphasis in these respects is clear from a letter written by Madame Blavatsky to the American Theosophists in 1888.

> Men cannot all be Occultists, but they can all be Theosophists. Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves; for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, goodwill to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features.

It is true enough that in the early days of the Movement, H.P.B. made it evident that she could perform certain "occult" phenomena, and reports of the Movement of that time describe what she did. It was, she said, for the purpose of showing the reality of hidden or occult laws, but not to win followers in the sense of "believers" in her powers. She expressed great relief when such demonstrations became counter-productive and were stopped. It is also true that the Third Object of the Theosophical Movement is concerned with "investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man." But this did not mean sitting for "occult development," as many statements by Madame Blavatsky made clear. How she regarded this Object is plain in what she wrote in "Recent Progress in Theosophy," an account of the Society and its undertakings published in the *North American Review* for August, 1890. While inner psychical growth and development were indeed taught to be human possibilities, these had a subordinate place in the work of the Movement. She said in this article:

> . . . only a portion of our fellows occupy themselves with the study of the occult properties of matter and the psychical powers of man. The society as a whole, then, is not concerned in this branch of research. And naturally; for out of every ten thousand people one may meet, the chances are that but a very small minority have the time, taste, or ability to take up such delicate and baffling studies. Those who do are born mystics, and, of course, natural Theosophists; a Theosophist being one who seeks after divine wisdom—*i.e.*, the comprehension of the ultimate causes of force, correlation, and psychic development, the method of solving all life's riddles. Persons of this temperament cannot be bigots; they chafe under the sectarian yoke, and their hearts warm with sympathy for all who suffer, who groan under social burdens resulting from ignorance, for all of any race, creed, or color, who aspire after knowledge. These men are true Theosophists, the brothers of humanity, and, in their complete development, the spiritual exemplars, guides, teachers, benefactors, of our race. We thought it a

> good thing to proclaim this line of research and self-discovery as the third of our three objects. For those who are interested in it, and all inquirers whom they can reach and encourage, have the mystical philosophical books of the present and former times been written. To the general public these books are caviare.

For obvious reasons, then, present-day Theosophists see no reason to urge acceptance of "occultism" upon all or any inquirers. This is an area for private and cautious investigation, and there are both philosophical and moral lessons to be well learned before even the first steps in that direction are taken. Nor would anyone who could be regarded as a genuine occultist ever parade his powers or seek "converts." That the scope of the Theosophical or occult philosophy goes far beyond the limits of established scientific knowledge is not only admitted, but affirmed. What cannot be demonstrated in objective terms is generally disregarded by scientific investigators, and quite rightly, one might say, according to the terms and definitions of their science. But again, quite rightly, it is now being recognized by even observers trained in scientific research that the world of objective phenomena by no means exhausts the possibility of human knowledge.

What, then, are the principles which should apply in investigating the subjective? This is a question as yet without an answer, and when one considers the extraordinary mixture of claims and bizarre doings of the sects so easily labelled "occult," one must conclude that no attempt has been made to differentiate between nominal and actual occultists. Of course, for a "scientific" comparison, it would be necessary to have a real occultist available for examination. We doubt very much that one will come forward to submit himself (or herself) for inspection. In her excellent book, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment,* Frances Yates revealed that her careful historical studies disclosed not a single individual who admitted to *being* a Rosicrucian, although there were ample records of Rosicrucian thought and philosophy. A similar obscurity may prevail when it comes to identifying the real occultists of today.

THREADS OF OCCULT SCIENCE

VII

THE term "Master Atom" is not applicable to the 7th principle, though it can be very properly used in reference to the 6th, the vehicle of spirit, or spiritual soul. The views of the occultists upon *spirit* and soul may be said to adopt the middle ground between the theories of Boscovich and Helmholtz, on the intimate nature of matter. The 7th principle, or rather its essence, belongs to the *seventh* state of matter, *i.e.,* a state which may be viewed in our mundane conceptions as pure spirit; while the nature of the *sixth* principle is not a *center of force* like its spirit, a centre in which the idea of all substance disappears altogether, but a fluidic or rather ethereal "atom." The former is undifferentiated, the latter—differentiated matter, though in its highest and purest state. One—the life that animates the atom, the other the vehicle that contains it [IV, 244].

To realize the conditions of spiritual existence of any sort it is necessary to get above the plane of merely physical perceptions. One cannot see the things of the spirit with the eyes of the flesh, and one cannot successfully appreciate subjective phenomena by help only of those intellectual reflections which appertain to the physical senses.

"How can a conscious existence without *activity or pursuit* be one of satisfaction or enjoyment?" It would only emphasize the mistaken idea which this question embodies if one were to ask instead, "how can a conscious existence without athletic sports and hunting be one of enjoyment?" The cravings of man's animal or even bodily human nature are not permanent in their character. The demands of the mind are different from those of the body. In physical life an ever recurring desire for change impresses our imagination with the idea that there can be no continuity of contentment without variety of occupation and amusement. To realize completely the way in which a single vein of spiritual consciousness may continue for considerable periods of time to engage the attention—not only the contented, but the delighted at-

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NOTE.—This collation of comments by H.P.B. is compiled from notes appearing in volumes I, III, and IV of the *Theosophist*, with sources given by volume and page.

tention—of a spiritual entity, is probably possible only for persons who already in life have developed certain inner faculties, dormant in mankind at large.

But meanwhile—as explained in recent essays on the subject —that one sort of variety is developed in Devachan in a very high degree; *viz,* the variety which naturally grows out of the simple themes set in vibration during life. Immense growths for example, of knowledge itself are possible in Devachan, for the spiritual entity which has begun the "pursuit" of such knowledge during life. Nothing can happen to a spirit in Devachan, the keynote of which has not been struck during life; the conditions of a subjective existence are such that the importation of quite external impulses and alien thoughts is impossible. But the seed of thought once sown—the current of thoughts once set going (the metaphor may freely be varied to suit any taste)—then its developments in Devachan may be infinite, for the sixth sense there, and the sixth principle, are our instructors, and in such society there can be no isolation, as physical humanity understands the term. The spiritual ego in fact, under the tuition of his own sixth principle, need be in no fear of being dull, and would be as likely to sigh for a doll's house or a box of ninepins as for the harps and palm-leaves of the mediaeval Heaven [IV, 202].

The reader is reminded in this connection that neither Devachan nor Avitchi is a locality, but a *state* which affects directly the being in it and all others only by *reaction* [IV, 270].

In the normal or natural state, the sensations are transmitted from the lowest physical to the highest spiritual body, *i.e.,* from the first to the 6th principle (the 7th being no organized or conditioned body, but an infinite hence unconditioned principle or state), the faculties of each body having to awaken the faculties of the next higher one to transmit the message in succession, until they reach the last, when, having received the impression, the latter (the spiritual soul) sends it back in an inverse order to the body. Hence, the faculties of some of the "bodies" (we use this word for want of a better term) being less developed, they fail to transmit the message correctly to the highest principle, and thus also fail to produce the right impression upon the physical senses, as a telegram may have started, from the place of its destination, faultless, and have been bungled up and misinterpreted by the telegraph operator at some intermediate station. This is why some people, otherwise en-

dowed with great intellectual powers and perceptive faculties, are often utterly unable to appreciate—say, the beauties of nature, or some particular moral quality; as, however perfect their physical intellect—unless the original, material or rough physical impression conveyed has passed in a circuit through the sieve of every "principle"—(from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, up to 7, and down again from 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, to No. 1)—and that every "sieve" is in good order—the spiritual perception will always be imperfect. The Yogi who, by a constant training and incessant watchfulness, keeps his septenary instrument in good tune, and whose spirit has obtained a perfect control over all, can, at will, and by paralyzing the functions of the four intermediate principles, communicate from body to spirit and *vice versa*—direct [III, 197].

Antah-karana is the path of communication between soul and body, entirely disconnected with the former: existing with, belonging to, and dying with the body [IV, 269].

Though we may purge our individual natures of evil, it can never be extirpated but must still linger in the whole expanse of the *Kosmos,* as the opposing power to active goodness, which maintains the equilibrium in Nature—in short, the equal balancing of the scales, the perfect harmony of discords [I, 184].

It is only when *Ego* becomes *Ego-ism,* deluded into a notion of independent existence as the producer in its turn of the five *Tanmatras,* that Manas is considered *Maha-bhutic* and finite in the sense of being connected with *Ahancara,* the *personal* "I-creating" faculty. Hence *Manas* is both eternal and non-eternal; eternal in its atomic nature (*paramanu rupa*); finite (or *karya-rupa*) when linked as a duad—with *kama* (*Volition*), a lower production [IV, 268].

Two adepts separated by hundreds of miles, leaving their bodies at their respective habitations *and their astral bodies* (the lower *manas* and volition *kama*) to watch over them, can still meet at some distant place and hold converse and even perceive and sense each other for hours *as though* they were both *personally* and bodily together, whereas, even their lower *mayavi-rupas* are absent [IV, 269].

The Vedanta philosophy teaches as much as Occult philosophy that our *monad,* during its life on earth as a *triad* (7th, 6th, and 5th principles), has, besides the condition of pure intelligence, three conditions; namely, waking, dreaming, and *sushupti*—a state of *dreamless* sleep—from the standpoint of terrestrial conceptions; of real, actual soul-life—from he occult stand-point. While man is either *dreamlessly,* profoundly asleep or in a trance state, the *triad* (Spirit, Soul and Mind) enters into perfect union with the Paramatma, the Supreme Universal Soul [IV, 267].

WHAT IS FIRE?

Fire is the most mystic of all the five elements, as also the most divine. Therefore to give an explanation of its various meanings on our plane alone, leaving all the other planes entirely out of the question, would be much too arduous, in addition to its being entirely incomprehensible for the vast majority. Fire is the father of light, light the parent of heat and air (vital air). If the absolute deity can be referred to as Darkness or the Dark Fire, the light, its first progeny, is truly the first self-conscious god. For what is light in its primordial root but the world-illuminating and life-giving deity? Light is that, which from an abstraction has become a reality. No one has ever seen real or primordial light; what we see is only its broken rays or reflections, which become denser and less luminous as they descend into form and matter. Fire, therefore, is a term which comprehends ALL. Fire is the invisible deity, "the Father," and the manifesting light is God "the Son," and also the Sun. Fire —in the occult sense—is æther, and æther is born of motion, and motion is the eternal dark, invisible Fire. Light sets in motion and controls all in nature, from that highest primordial æther down to the tiniest molecule in Space. MOTION is eternal *per se,* and in the manifested Kosmos it is the Alpha and Omega of that which is called electricity, galvanism, magnetism, sensation—moral and physical—thought, and even life, on this planet. Thus fire, on our plane, is simply the manifestation of motion, or life.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

EVERYDAY OCCULTISM

THE title of the first Chapter of the *Gita* has been variously rendered by its many translators and commentators, each in accordance with his wisdom or his predilection.

In William Q. Judge's version this first Chapter is called the Despondency of Arjuna. In his Notes on the *Gita,* written before he had made his own rendition and when he had before him the translations of Wilkins and Thomson, he called the *Gita* "a personal book." No other commentator, so far as we are aware, has ever put on record this Initiation into the mysteries of one of the greatest treatises of all time on Spiritual evolution. In the same way, instead of rendering the sub-title of the *Gita* "the Book of Yoga," Mr. Judge incarnates it in the phrase, "the Book of Devotion."

Devotion is something that all men have. As an abstraction it is a Spiritual power, function or faculty everywhere present in Nature. Its presence in the individual is personal to him and may by him be turned to sense, or self, or to wrong pursuits or improper practices. When so used it is given a distinct designation, *Kama,* and becomes not only the passions and desires of the human being from moment to moment and from day to day, but also those deep-seated inheritances from his own past lives and use or abuse of this Power—inheritances which we call his tendencies, and by other names. If such personal use is long-continued it will become in the end his ruling destiny.

The utterances of Krishna, then, were not for the purpose of inspiring Arjuna with Devotion, but to instruct him, now faced with the consequences of the past, how to use this Power for the removal of those self-made obstructions, and in this changed direction of his energies raise himself from manhood to Divinity.

That this divine transformation is not to be achieved after death, or by leaving the body in any of the ways variously designated as "communicating with spirits," "going into the silence,"

NOTE—This article is from a series of essays on the ***Bhagavad-Gita*** first printed in Volume 15 of THEOSOPHY.

"going into the astral," trance, psychism, mediumship, or by retiring from the world, is clearly shown by the symbolism that Krishna, who was a Master of Devotion, was *in the same chariot* with Arjuna, his pupil in the mighty Art. All commentators are agreed that by "chariot" the human body is meant. If our Devotion is to benefit ourselves and the other members of the human family, it has to be understandingly used in all its potencies here and now by the *living* man, whether Master or man. Why this is so is easily seen. It is only in the embodied man that all the Powers and Forces of Great nature meet and mingle. On no other plane of being can he contact the whole of nature, both the homogeneous and the heterogeneous, from the Divine to the Infernal; therefore on no other plane can he receive the full award of all his actions, whether good or bad. Here, all the lessons of life are to be learned in their completeness, if they are to be learned at all.

But again, Mr. Judge knew that Western students by their karmic heredity are prone to give all their attention to *effects perceived,* whereas not only are there many, and most weighty, effects not perceived at all in an understanding sense, but every one of those effects, slight, intermediate, or beyond measure, is ineradicably connected with its cause. The cause of every occurrence of the present is rooted in the past, so that this past continually reproduces itself in the personal present, with only those changes which biologists call mutation, that is, the changes due to environment, favorable or unfavorable, which we call opportunity or necessity. This reproduction is simply that from seed, or latency, to stalk and full-grown tree, and so on in an endless cycle of mere repetition. Actions are by us converted into thoughts; those thoughts are thrust aside from our consciousness by other actions and other thoughts, but they do not perish for that, any more than seeds perish when scattered from the stem on which they grew. They fall into other portions of our nature than the physical or personal, as seeds into soil, and in due season or cycle, behold those thoughts reproduce themselves in new incarnations and actions. Man, made of thought, occupant only of many bodies from time to time, is eternally thinking, and that thinking is the cause of his embodiments and all their sequences of action, of pleasure and pain, of good and evil fortune. Among effects not understandingly perceived, and spoken of as most weighty, is the vast difference in the kind of births, bodies and environment in

which men find themselves, the vast difference in tendencies of all kinds, the mutations which occur in individuals and species in the same or varying circumstances. Our wisest and most learned men can only take note of the facts and speculate as to their possible meaning, with no great measure of success either in amelioration or prevention—and certainly with no success whatever in the way of real cure of social and individual ills. It has become an axiom in religion, in science, and in everyday life that "human nature cannot be changed." All this gives point to the homely, because applicable wisdom of Mr. Judge's advice to the Western striver for perfection: "Try to see in each event a deep significance, an Occult meaning."

So little are we versed in looking for Causes *in ourselves* for what happens to us as well as what we do, the active and passive phases of the power of Thought or Devotion, that a great Despondency envelops us the moment we try to pierce through the veil of effects to the plane of causes—because all that we can see at first is the immense and unsuspected array of consequences which intervene between us and the goal; many of them thoughts and ideas still dear to us, now that we see we must not merely part with them for a time, but must destroy them. Although all the other Chapters are called Devotion of one kind and another, this First chapter is entitled Despondency. So overwhelmed is Arjuna, so little versed in the two directions called Cause and Effect, that he decides to give up the battle without a struggle.

But from Krishna's standpoint, although in the same chariot on the same field, not only was there no occasion or room for despondency, but every motive for rejoicing, every reason for the full employment of this power of Devotion. Why? Because he knew that out of death comes life, out of despondency comes Self-energization, when the struggling Soul realizes at last that there is no room for compromise; no use in trying to travel in two directions at once; no possibility of "carrying water on both shoulders"; that the Will, the Supreme Power of Devotion, *cannot* be divided, that it is one and indivisible. Krishna knew that, in the fulness of Time, the battle was joined for Arjuna; no retreat was possible; the issues were made up; there was but one thing to do—"fight out the field," with no quarter on either side.

We are to note that Arjuna's temporary and futile decision was not due to fear of his enemies—but to love of many of them. His

despondency was not due to what he saw, but to the way he felt about it. It is never "circumstances" which overwhelm any of us, nor fear of them. It is indecision or futile decision arising from past mistaken direction given to the Will; it is our erroneous sense of our Duty, due in its turn to the false judgments of the past in the matters familiarly called right and wrong. We *want* to do right, and *fear* to do wrong. This anomaly, when produced, as it is in every moment of crisis, is what is meant by Despondency. One who wants to do right, and does it, is never troubled by despondency. One who really wants to do wrong and does it, is never troubled by despondency. It is not even hinted in the *Gita* that there was any despondency whatever in any of the party of Duryodhana, although not only were they on the wrong side, but King Duryodhana himself is voiced as saying that he knew his own army was "insufficient," while he was well aware that the forces of Arjuna were "sufficient." This most astonishing statement, in which lie hidden the keys to many natures and to all popular religions, receives some measure of explanation in a portion of the tenth and eleventh Chapters, and in the description of the "demoniacal nature" in the sixteenth Chapter. But its real validity involves the mystery of the "lower self" in every man, and that mystery, says Mr. Judge, "never was solved for any man; it must be solved by each man for himself." A direct and universal statement on the same subject is that in the *Voice of the Silence:* "The Self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear. There is no room for both." *Maya,* or the illusion of appearances, is a familiar word to Theosophical students. All Maya is a deception, and is due to the power of the Soul itself to "present an appearance," that is, to *take what form it* WILL." That form is all too often *self*-deception. But since the Soul is the Perceiver of all appearances, even of its own deceptions, every soul *knows,* when it faces *itself,* its own hypocrisy and pretences to knowledge, virtue, power, and dominion. No man can "fool himself" or others except by an act of the Will. The party of Duryodhana will always fight, but will never reflect, for "reflection" is the direct perception by the Soul of its own mental and moral nature, as the storehouse of all those seeds of thought once ripened by us on the tree of past lives. Those who read and talk of the "astral" light and nature and the "intoxication" it produces in the unwary soul, may see both in the fighting drunk-

enness of Duryodhana and the despondency of Arjuna. In the light of the Soul our past becomes luminous with the spectral shapes our thoughts once habited; the Devotion we once put into them, galvanized into new life, re-energizes them—and we, feeling the *void,* are "filled with despondency."

Perhaps Mr. Judge called the *Gita* "a personal book" because it is the autobiography of each one of us. We write its paragraphs and pages with every fleeting thought and impression, seldom or never deliberately re-reading what we have written in order to correct it as we journey through life. With most men the re-reading of this "Life-Ledger" does not, therefore, take place till the hour of death, and then perforce, for the way out of the Soul is through thought, as was its way in to this body of Dhritarashtra. But "Arjuna" is the Student, Western or Eastern, who has decided to do his re-reading and correction of Life's diary consciously, that is by Will, instead of under the duress of death or necessity —to compose his *Bhagavad-Gita* in waking, human life, while in the very chariot, the body and circumstances of everyday existence. Adjustments made here are permanent; those postponed by an "act of faith" in some God or other extraneous power, or by neglect or self-deception, only increase the size and strength of Duryodhana's "army" while we continue our wanderings. There will never come (favorite self-deception) a "more favorable time" than now, for to the WILL, the *Bhima* of Arjuna's army, the only time there is is *now,* the seeing moment of waking life. All other "time" is of Memory and Imagination, and these two "generals," without the Will, are invariably on the other side.

"Nothing is created, but is only transformed. Nothing can manifest itself in this universe—from a globe down to a vague, rapid thought—that was not in the universe already; everything on the subjective plane is an eternal Is; as everything on the objective plane is an *ever becoming*—because transitory."

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

letters · questions · comment

Man is said to be striving toward a conscious existence in spirit instead of matter. But theosophical teachings do not advise men to cut themselves off from material existence, as if the life of spirit were separate from matter. What is the relationship between these two poles of existence?

Since the physical universe is indeed the theater of growth and evolution, it would be folly to try to "cut ourselves off" from the realities of embodied existence before we have learned the lessons which involvement in matter can teach us. Matter, we might say, represents forms of life which we have not yet understood, and which therefore appear to be "objective" and separate from us. Accepting this "separateness" and acting as though matter were an independent reality is what needs to be overcome. Matter is not "evil," but attachment to it is delusive, generating a false idea of self. To speak of a "conscious existence in spirit" is to describe the life in which that false idea of self has been overcome.

Man, like the universe, is the theater of growth. He is the microcosm in which, as Mr. Judge says, all natures meet and mingle. In order for the perceiver to be conscious on every plane, and so achieve universal consciousness, it is necessary that the higher see through the eyes of the lower. Through lower Manas, Higher Manas gains contact with the forms of life and experience on this plane. Our whole range of instruments provides opportunities for experience of terrestrial life. Since an instrument is also a limitation—a focus—there is always the possibility of mistaking what we perceive through that instrument for the totality of experience. One who has learned to live a conscious existence in spirit is no longer prone to this mistake.

As for the relationship between spirit and matter, here we are required to quote *The Secret Doctrine,* since such a question, posed at the level of ultimate generality or abstraction, calls for precise metaphysical clarity:

> To "Spirit" is referable every manifestation of consciousness, reflective or direct. . . . "Matter" must be regarded as

objectivity in its purest abstraction—the self-existing basis whose septenary manvantaric differentiations constitute the objective reality underlying the phenomena of each phase of conscious existence. . . .

There can be no manifestation of Consciousness, semi-consciousness, or even "unconscious purposiveness," except through the vehicle of matter; that is to say, on this our plane, wherein human consciousness *in its normal state* cannot soar beyond what is known as transcendental metaphysics, it is only through some molecular aggregation or fabric that Spirit wells up in a stream of individual or sub-conscious subjectivity. And as Matter existing apart from perception is a mere abstraction, both of these aspects of the ABSOLUTE—Cosmic Substance and Cosmic Ideation—are mutually inter-dependent. In strict accuracy—to avoid confusion and misconception—the term "Matter" ought to be applied to the aggregate of objects of possible perception, and "Substance" to *noumena;* for inasmuch as the phenomena of *our* plane are the creation of the perceiving Ego—the modifications of its own subjectivity—all the "states of matter representing the aggregate of perceived objects" can have but a relative and purely phenomenal existence for the children of our plane. (I, 328-29.)

Something said by Mr. Crosbie in "The Origin of Evil" (see *The Friendly Philosopher*) helps us to relate these subtleties to our own lives:

When we get the right attitude of mind—and that is what discipleship is—there is not a quality in us, not a force, not an attribute, but can be put to the best and highest use. We do not get off this plane. We do not cut off any part of our being. We do not destroy the usefulness of any part of us, but put all to the proper use and for the proper end. . . . [The man] works right here where he finds himself and does the best work he can with the instrument he now has, fearing nothing, trusting the Law of his own being. If any being will trust the Law of his own nature, if he will work on with nature by helping all others in every direction possible, then all nature will turn and help him. It never was otherwise. It cannot be otherwise.

Can we say that the Law of Karma and Cycles is an aspect of the Absolute, as stated in the first Fundamental Proposition, or does one relate to God and the other to Man?

If it be borne in mind that "God" is no anthropomorphic being, but an absolute, all-pervasive principle, inseparable from any form of life, it might be said that Karma and Cycles make that aspect of the Absolute which is in manifestation. A passage in

The Secret Doctrine gives the relationship of natural laws to the eternal principle of Law:

> It is idle to speak of "laws arising when Deity prepares to create" for (*a*) laws or rather LAW is eternal and uncreated; and (*b*) that Deity is LAW, and *vice versa*. Moreover, the one eternal LAW unfolds everything in the (to be) manifested Nature on a sevenfold principle; among the rest, the countless circular chains of worlds, composed of seven globes, graduated on the four lower planes of the world of formation (the three others belonging to the Archetypal Universe). Out of these seven only *one, the lowest and the most material of those globes,* is within our plane or means of perception, the six others lying outside of it and being therefore invisible to the terrestrial eye. Every such chain of worlds is the progeny and creation of another, *lower,* and *dead* chain—*its reincarnation,* so to say. (*S.D.* I, 152.)

What is the significance of the pain and pleasure which accompany learning? The Gita *stresses the importance of being free from these pairs of opposites, but in the case of children, or students beginning to learn the rudiments of any skill, pleasurable and rewarding experiences seem desirable. Related to this question is the fact that the lower kingdoms of nature advance according to a well-regulated harmony while man seems to learn the most through suffering. Why is this?*

We might note, first, that the *Gita* is addressed to Arjuna, who has been through the fires of purging experience, and not to "children." Arjuna has chosen Krishna for his counselor, which would imply that he has reached beyond the place where one can benefit from "positive reinforcement" through personal encouragement of one sort or another. The path described by the *Gita* is one marked by the elimination of personal needs and responses—that, at any rate, is the goal. Yet perhaps we can say that there seem times when the Teacher gives Arjuna personal encouragement of a sort. Yet again, no Teacher encourages any serious disciple either to look for or to expect personal reward.

If we could understand the dynamics of emancipation from the psychology of personal life—a long and painful process—there would probably be no discernible contradiction of experience in the passage cited.

We might reflect that, in the quest for knowledge, the realizations gained can be regarded as appropriate and inescapable reward—reflecting the laws of nature. We begin to learn, perhaps

from fear of the pain which ignorance imposes on us. This is the contributing of suffering. A desire to learn may be born in this way. But in time, as we learn, a higher motive may exert its influence—the *will* to learn, as an expression of our true being. Arising from perception of glimmers of spiritual knowledge, that will does not require the goad of failure or the spur of success; it is the force of spirit in action. As to the advance of the lives in the lower kingdoms of nature, we know comparatively little about how this proceeds, and of the rate of progress involved. Moreover, evolution in the kingdoms is the development of forms, while human evolution is moral, intellectual and spiritual.

A statement by Robert Crosbie in *Answers to Questions on the Ocean of Theosophy* (p. 109) seems particularly applicable to the whole question of the pain and pleasure associated with learning. On the nature of the will he says:

> Will is the energy of Consciousness expressed in action, on any plane of manifestation. There are many aspects of the Will, from the ordinary one which is "the will to live" and is expressed in the automatic physical action, such as the heart-beat, digestion, etc.; that of the actions following on ordinary thought, desires and wants; that which is developed by various forms of practice; to the highest phase, that of the Spiritual Will. This phase is developed by true unselfishness, a sincere and full desire to be guided, ruled and assisted by the Higher Self, and to do that which, and suffer or enjoy whatever, the Higher Self has in store for one by way of discipline or experience.

on the lookout

"The Unconscious Before Freud"

In a thoughtful discussion of "Poetry and Psychology" in the *Aryan Path* for August, 1973, Howard Sergeant quotes briefly from Lionel Trilling's essay, *Freud and Literature:*

> . . . when on the occasion of his 70th birthday, Freud was greeted as "the discoverer of the unconscious," he corrected the speaker and disclaimed the title. "The poets and the philosophers before me discovered the unconscious," he said. "What I discovered was the scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied."

This was a suitable admission, as L. L. Whyte's book, *The Unconscious Before Freud,* makes evident. And often the poets offered a far more symmetrical view of the human being than Freud's "scientific method" would allow. Ira Progoff's *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology,* a study of what happened in psychoanalysis and psychology after Freud, shows the long and tortuous process by which psychoanalysis began to find its way back to a more comprehensive understanding of human nature, through reforms introduced by Jung, Adler, and Rank.

Changing Views

It is of interest to take note of the strong revisionist tendency in current psychoanalytical writing in this respect. Daniel Yankelovich and William Barrett reveal a side to Freud's thinking that has been almost wholly neglected. In their book, *Ego and Instinct,* they find that for Freud, the ego is weak, the instincts strong, that the ego has no goals of its own, but borrows from the instinctual drives of the id. The idea that the human being longs to reach beyond itself had little or no mention in Freud's system. Yet, paradoxically, he did not, when questioned, deny the spirit. The writers of *Ego and Instinct* remark:

> The long-standing secular stance of our culture tends to make us regard the "spiritual" as a vestigial remain of sectarian religion.

> Yet Freud himself—in that conversation with Ludwig Binswanger which we have taken as a dramatic and pivotal episode for understanding the history of psychoanalysis—speaks of the "spiritual" (*geistige*). "Man has always known that he has spirit," he remarked to the younger psychiatrist, "it has been for me to show him that he is instinctual." Confronting the contemporary situation, we are hardly likely to agree with him that man today knows he has spirit. In fact, a large part of psychoanalytic ego psychology is devoted to recapturing qualities of the human person which Freud simply took for granted in his reference to spirit but which we can no longer take for granted today.

Metaphysics Needed

In the same conversation Binswanger commented to Freud on a patient who had succumbed to a self-destructive neurosis, saying that the failure might have come from a "deficiency of spirit." Freud agreed, greatly surprising Binswanger. Relating the incident, he said: "I could hardly believe my ears when I heard him say, 'Yes, spirit (*geist*) is everything'." The authors of *Ego and Instinct* suggest that Freud meant by this "a defeat of the whole person." While their book is an effort to amend psychoanalytical theory so that it will have room for human freedom, one suspects that much more than finding hidden admissions of the human spirit in Freud will be required for this recovery. The animalization of the idea of man in modern psychology has been too thorough, and an altogether new beginning seems necessary. The clarity of the Theosophical metaphysics, in the doctrine of the monads, of the duality of man, and of his sevenfold nature, would be of great assistance in this task.

Human Distinction and Evolution

In an interview in the Summer *American Scholar,* the late Jacob Bronowski remarked that his present interest is in the unique qualities or characteristics of human beings, meaning "those biological and behavioral expressions" which have *human specificity.* He names science and poetry as distinctively human achievements. Human specificity, for Bronowski, involves the idea of evolution. He rejects the idea of an "evolutionary plan," because that, he says, "supposes a planner." Yet evolution runs counter to the second law of thermodynamics, which postulates that the universe is running down. Evolution, he maintains, follows a statistical

pattern. Asked if depending on a statistical pattern for the emergence of *human specificity* did not reduce it to a mere accident, Bronowski made this interesting reply:

> On the contrary, it is those who appeal to God and special creation who reduce everything to accident. They assign to man a unique status on the ground that there was some act of special creation which made the world the way it is. But that explains nothing because it would explain anything: it is an explanation for *any* conceivable world. If we had the color vision of the bee combined with the neck of the giraffe and the feet of the elephant, that would be equally explained by the "theory" of special creation.
>
> Yet we do not have those features, and we do not believe that they are biologically compatible. Therefore, our criterion of what is compatible sets a limitation on an acceptable explanation. That is why I say that to call it a special or miraculous act of creation reduces every conceivable world to accident.

Toward Complexity

Asked if he had substituted statistics for God, Bronowski answered:

> The puzzle of evolution is not that things change, but that living things and their products become more complex. There is nothing to explain nowadays except the *evolution of complexity*. What does a theory of evolution have to explain? That by and large, natural processes destroy any order they meet—like breaking an egg. By contrast, the egg in evolving grew more complex in time—it has the arrow of time written on the eggshell.

But the eggshell was not an accident, surely, the questioner exclaimed, and Bronowski said that complexity represents the hope of stability—increased resistance to the forces of entropy:

> . . . "stable" simply means that it is less likely to break down under environmental disturbances. This is, of course, exactly where the direction of evolution aims. It is what life is about: an organization of matter which is less likely to break down under environmental disturbances than its parts are. And that is how it runs against the second law of thermodynamics.
>
> I call that *the evolution of complexity*, and it works by what I call *stratified stability*. As a statistical concept it holds water, and I am confident that it will become the fundamental account of evolution.

To Get a Sonnet Written

The interviewer calls this a strategy in nature herself, asking

if it does not suggest "some kind of anthropomorphic or plan-like strategy in evolution as a creator?" Bronowski seems to evade this question, but makes an interesting reply:

> I will illustrate how I interpret the achievement of evolution in shaping the human mind to seek for knowledge and creative ideas. Supposing, as Arthur Eddington suggested, that we really did set down a battery of monkeys at typewriters in the hope that they might type, not the works of Shakespeare, but a single couplet—say, the sonnet which begins, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?/Thou art more lovely and more temperate." Then I once calculated that in the fifteen thousand million years that the universe has existed, the monkeys, even with considerable mechanical aid, would not yet have typed by chance the sequence of words, "Shall I compare thee to a sum"—which, you observe, falls far short of Shakespeare.
>
> The fact is that the evolution of man is the quickest way to write a sonnet. The human mind is a new step, which has opened up a new wealth of creation.

"Evolution of Conscious Life"

Asked if with knowledge there begins a new level of creation, Bronowski said:

> Yes, there lies the deep question: What is the place of knowledge in the future? And there it is crucial to understand the status of knowledge.
>
> Knowledge is *our* element. . . .

If Dr. Bronowski can be taken as a spokesman of contemporary science, there is apparently considerable advance from the preoccupations of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the conception of evolution seems still harnessed to biological considerations, and there is no hint of the mind in nature behind the arrow on the eggshell—so that Bronowski's interviewer is able to accuse him of covert anthropomorphism. Yet the idea of knowledge as the element of human development is indeed a philosophical conception, however limited in application. Meanwhile, Bronowski's classically firm stance against the idea of God as creator may be appreciated. One might say that the present stage of intellectual development does not permit a contemporary scientific thinker to say that "Nature consciously prefers that matter should be indestructible in organic rather than inorganic forms, and works slowly but incessantly towards the realization of this object

—the evolution of conscious life out of inert material." This is occultism's way of speaking of the "evolution of complexity."

Origin of Form

Nor can either a biologist or a psychologist yet admit what was declared long years ago in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 282):

> Everything that *is*, *was*, and *will be* eternally is, even the countless forms, which are finite and perishable only in their objective, not in their *ideal* Form. They existed as Ideas, in the Eternity, and, when they pass away, will exist as reflections. Neither the form of man, nor that of any animal, plant or stone has ever been *created*, and it is only on this plane of ours that it commenced "becoming," *i.e.*, objectivising into its present materiality, or expanding *from within outwards*, from the most sublimated and supersensuous essence into its grossest appearance.
>
> Occultism teaches that no form can be given to anything, either by nature or by man, whose ideal type does not already exist on the subjective plane. More than this; that no such form or shape can possibly enter man's consciousness, or evolve in his imagination, which does not exist in prototype, at least as an approximation.

An Art of Centuries

An article on ancient Asian cave art in the May 5 issue of "California Living" (a part of the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner*) is titled "Ellora and Ajanta: The Unfamiliar Miracle." Marcella Rabwin describes with open admiration the carvings and paintings which may be seen in these caves. Paying due respect to the ancient societies capable of producing such exquisite works of art, she says:

> The drama of their creation in the two mountain areas on the outskirts of Aurangabad covers a period of a thousand years. Between the third century B.C. and the seventh century A.D., monks of the Buddhist and Hindu religions carved them. This in itself is not *how* they did it, and the results they obtained, that dazzle the imagination.
>
> Starting at the top of a mountain, using the most primitive of trowels and chisels, they carved these elaborate cave temples laboriously, inch by inch, into the hard rock of the mountain (some units taking hundreds of years each). Details were carved as they went along, so that the finished temples, some as large as a great cathedral, were done as a single carving. Not one object in the interior was brought in from the outside.
>
> When the floor was completed, doorways were cut to the outside world and the temple was complete. You cannot con-

ceive until you see them, their magnitude, ornateness, skill and extravagant beauty.

Unsurpassed Frescoes

Some of the carvings at Ellora, Miss Rabwin says, consist of hundred-foot statues of Buddha, friezes, and columns of great intricacy and detail, all having the continuity of a single work. The Hindus, she adds, "conceived like giants and executed like jewelers." Of the paintings in the dark caves at Ajanta, she says:

> Ajanta differs from Ellora in that the walls there are covered with tempera frescoes depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha, the Ramayana, the ordinary experiences of the times, and the Hindu philosophy of life and love. . . .
>
> Painted under such difficult conditions, many of the Ajanta wall frescoes cannot be surpassed in the history of art. There is one "Mother and Child" which can stand comparison with any of the great Italian Renaissance Madonnas.

World-Wide Symbolism

H.P.B. suggests that ancient works of art constitute a symbolic language in which are preserved the teachings of archaic philosophy about the nature of the universe. A passage in the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine* is illustrative:

> The evolution and correlation of the mysteries of Kosmos, of its growth and development—spiritual and physical, abstract and concrete—were first recorded in geometrical changes of shape. Every Cosmogony began with a circle, a point, a triangle, and a cube, up to number 9, when it was synthesized by the first line and a circle—the Pythagorean mystic *Decade*, the sum of all, involving and expressing the mysteries of the entire Kosmos; recorded a hundred times more fully in the Hindu system, for him who can understand its mystic language. The numbers 3 and 4, in their blending of 7, as those of 5, 6, 9, and 10, are the very corner-stone of Occult Cosmogonies. This decade and its thousand combinations are found in every portion of the globe. One recognizes them in the caves and rock-cut temples of Hindostan and Central Asia, as in the pyramids and lithoi of Egypt and America; in the Catacombs of Ozymandyas, in the mounds of the Caucasian snow-capped fastnesses, in the ruins of Palenque, in Easter Island, everywhere whither the foot of ancient man has ever journeyed. The 3 and the 4, the triangle and the cube, or the male and female universal glyph, showing the first aspect of the evolving deity, is stamped for ever in the Southern Cross in the Heavens, as in the Egyptian *Crux-Ansata*. (I, 321.)

Bamian Statues

Among the ruins and monuments that abound in Central Asia are other statues even larger than those at Ajanta, assumed by some orientalists to be of Buddha. H.P.B. states that these are of much greater antiquity than has been supposed by researchers, though they have been subjected both to periodic renovation and vandalism through the centuries. This makes identification of their age difficult for archeologists who begin with foreshortened estimates of man's antiquity. She says:

> In days of old, Bamian was a portion of the ancient city of Djooljool, ruined and destroyed to the last stone by Tchengis-Khan in the XIIIth century. The whole valley is hemmed in by colossal rocks, which are full of partially natural and partially artificial caves and grottoes, once the dwellings of Buddhist monks who had established in them their *viharas*. Such *viharas* are to be met with in profusion, to this day, in the rock-cut temples of India and the valleys of Jellalabad. It is at the entrance of some of these that five enormous statues, of what is regarded as Buddha, have been discovered or rather *rediscovered* in our century, as the famous Chinese traveller, Hiouen-Thsang, speaks of, and saw them, when he visited Bamian in the VIIth century.
>
> When it is maintained that no larger statues exist on the whole globe, the fact is easily proven on the evidence of all the travellers who have examined them and taken their measurements. Thus, the largest is 173 feet high, or *seventy* feet higher than the "Statue of Liberty" now at New York, as the latter is only 105 feet or 34 metres high. The famous Colossus of Rhodes itself, between whose limbs passed easily the largest vessels of those days, measured only 120 to 130 feet in height. The second statue, cut out in the rock like the first one, is only 120 feet (15 feet taller than the said "Liberty"). The third statue is only 60 feet high—the two others still smaller, the last one being only a little larger than the average tall man of our present race. (II, 338.)

Record of the Races

H.P.B. says further on that these statues were remodelled by monks who arrived there about the first century A.D. The drapery, of plaster, is much more recent than the stone figures beneath. She comments:

> . . . The statue itself has therefore to be assigned to a far earlier period than Buddhism. Whom does it represent in such case, it may be asked?

Once more tradition, corroborated by written records, answers the query, and explains the mystery. The Buddhist Arhats and Ascetics found the five statues, and many more, now crumbled down to dust, and as the three were found by them in colossal niches at the entrance of their future abode, they covered the figures with plaster, and, over the old, modelled new statues made to represent Lord Tathagata. The interior walls of the niches are covered to this day with bright paintings of human figures, and the sacred image of Buddha is repeated in every group. These frescoes and ornaments—which remind one of the Byzantine style of painting—are all due to the piety of the monk-ascetics, like some other minor figures and rock-cut ornamentations. But the five statues belong to the handiwork of the Initiates of the Fourth Race, who sought refuge, after the submersion of their continent, in the fastnesses and on the summits of the Central Asian mountain chains. Moreover, the five statues are an imperishable record of the esoteric teaching about the gradual evolution of the races.

To Instruct Future Generations

The largest is made to represent the First Race of mankind, its ethereal body being commemorated in hard, everlasting stone, for the instruction of future generations, as its remembrance would otherwise never have survived the Atlantean Deluge. The second—120 feet high—represents the sweat-born; and the third—measuring 60 feet—immortalizes the race that fell, and thereby inaugurated the first *physical* race, born of father and mother, the last descendants of which are represented in the Statues found on Easter Isle; but they were only from 20 to 25 feet in stature at the epoch when Lemuria was submerged, after it has been nearly destroyed by volcanic fires. The Fourth Race was still smaller, though gigantic in comparison with our present Fifth Race, and the series culminated finally in the latter. (See the following sub-section on "Cyclopean Ruins, and Colossal Stones as Witnesses to Giants.")

These are, then, the "Giants" of antiquity, the ante- and post-diluvian *Gibborim* of the Bible. They lived and flourished one million rather than between three and four thousand years ago. (*S.D.* II, 339-40.)

Violence to Children

In the *Nation* for June 8 Celeste MacLeod surveys the efforts of various communities throughout the country to deal with the increasing physical violence perpetrated on children, especially by parents. Interestingly, the general tone of these efforts is not one of blame for such appalling behavior but of seeking to help parents

to understand the sources of the intolerable tensions which reach expression in cruelty of this sort. The *Nation* writer points out that children who have been subjected to violence are likely to perpetuate the cycle when they become parents. Part of the problem is the extreme mobility of the population, which isolates both young parents and children from the stability of family and community ties. Local centers are being formed in many communities to provide the kind of immediate help and support in times of crisis that, in former times, was available from nearby relatives or long-time neighbors and friends.

Wider Relationships Needed

The writer comments:

> Although child abuse is widespread today, it is not new, nor is it unique to the United States. But there has probably never been a country where the nuclear family is as totally responsible for child raising, or where so many people live in isolation. Vance Packard has called us *A Nation of Strangers* because we move around so much. In other times and places, parents in stress could send their children to a sister or a neighbor for a while. An abused child might run to such homes for refuge, until dad or mom calmed down. Infant battering was hard to hide when the rest of the family lived close by and neighbors knew one another well. Our village days are gone, even if a few people try to simulate that atmosphere through communal living. In this mobile industrial society, we need new outlets to compensate for the old resources.

In the absence of such relieving relationships, children often become objects of unreasonable demands for exemplary behavior. Many communities now offer counseling and the service of "reparenting" groups, as well as immediate practical help of whatever kind is needed, in an effort to restructure traditional ties between people.

A Broader Outlook

But, the *Nation* writer goes on to say, another important aspect of the problem is that the extremes of violence in child abuse are but an extension of culturally acceptable methods of dealing with children, even though they are rejected in the adult world. It follows that fundamental changes are required:

> All these programs may salvage the lives of individual families, but until one fundamental cause is dealt with, the chances

> of making a significant dent in the battering cycle are slim. Physical force against children is the prevailing acceptable method of child rearing in this country. Denver psychiatrists Brandt Steele and Carl Pollock have noted the tie-in. "Dealing with the abused child we are not observing an isolated unique phenomenon, but only the extreme form of what we could call a pattern or style of child rearing quite prevalent in our culture." Spanking children is as American as apple pie. Anything goes—until the injury requires hospitalization or kills the child. Then hitting suddenly becomes monstrous.

This sort of thinking about the methods of child-rearing suggests that the old idea of "punishing" children is no longer taken for granted. Humans, as Madame Blavatsky remarks in *The Key to Theosophy,* "may use restrictive not punitive measures," and this applies to children as well as to adults. Children respond best to humanizing influences, and the *Nation* review of the growing rejection of violence against them may signify recognition of the crucial importance of a consistently friendly environment.

Fear of Privacy

While Americans now congregate in larger groups, there is growing uneasiness about the invasion of privacy through surveillance by government and the credit departments of private businesses. However, D. J. R. Bruckner notes in a column in the *Los Angeles Times* (May 26) that this loss of individual privacy can be traced to a deeper cause:

> The truly dangerous invasion of privacy that threatens us is the invasion of imagination, of thought, of dreaming and fantasy.
>
> The vehicles of this invasion are many, but outstanding are the different forms of electronic media whose essential characteristic is their domination of the time and minds of individuals.
>
> We Americans are especially susceptible to this invasion. We are mostly more suspicious of real privacy than of real wickedness; our principle seems to be that as long as we do it together it is all right.

Basic to this diagnosis seems the recognition that human beings need to have and live inner or private lives, in order to preserve those outer securities which are the guardians of freedom. As in other areas of experience, even in mere physiology, lack of exercise brings atrophy and finally loss of use. Here is a very practical application of the importance of self-knowledge. The riches of the self need understanding if they are not to be lost through indifference and neglect.